



Tropical Nature Artist's Holiday

with Christine Elder at
The Lodge & Spa at Pico Bonito,
Honduras

February 13-21, 2020

\$2,850 double/ \$3,700 single

Join teaching artist and professional illustrator Christine Elder for this exciting eight-night retreat in the tropical rainforest of Honduras. We will combine nature exploration and artistic expression amid the rustic luxury and solitude of Pico Bonito, creating a truly transformational week in paradise!

No prior art experience is necessary, just a playful curiosity about nature and an open-minded desire to learn and practice new skills. Even experienced artists will enhance their skills as we immerse ourselves in splendor!

Along the northern coast of Honduras is a luscious rainforest filled with exquisite flora and fauna. It's the perfect place to learn and practice nature sketching skills, filling your sketchbook with hummingbirds and heliconias, agoutis and aracarís. You'll find ample inspiration at the luxurious and tranquil Lodge at Pico Bonito. The Lodge sits at the edge of Pico Bonito National Park, inside Central America's largest contiguous rainforest, with views of cloud-enshrouded 8,000-foot peaks amid lush gardens, showcasing an amazing diversity of tropical vegetation. The property supports over 400 bird species, plus monkeys, exotic insects and reptiles, and five species of wild cats, including the iconic jaguar. During our holiday we will explore the Lodge's network of private trails and gardens, learn and practice field sketching and painting techniques, and be entertained by dozens of hummingbirds as they zip by us on the verandas.

ABOUT YOUR LEADER

You'll study with professional naturalist, teaching artist, and biological illustrator, Christine Elder. For over 20 years, Christine has been teaching people of all ages and ability levels to draw and paint nature's wonders. Christine's experience as a freelance illustrator includes projects for organizations such as the National Park Service, Birds Caribbean and the Botanical Society of America.

Some of you will also know Christine as one of our regular birding guides, having traveled with us from Alaska to Florida, and to international destinations such as Italy, Mexico, Peru and Borneo. She has also led multiple successful tours to Honduras. In our Honduran paradise at Pico Bonito, she will share her best secrets and techniques for sketching flora and fauna in pencil, pen, and watercolor. Learn more about Christine on her [website](#).



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Luxurious accommodations; the Lodge and Spa at Pico Bonito, with your own secluded cabin, with its own veranda and hammock.
- Daily workshops and presentations; learn about sketching tools & techniques and local natural history.
- Visit Rio Santiago Nature Resort; the “Hummingbird Capital of Honduras.”
- Visit Cuero y Salado Coastal Wildlife Refuge; train and boat ride through mangrove estuaries to view monkeys, crocodiles, and wetland birds.
- Private naturalist-led hikes; stroll through the rainforest jungle with English-speaking Lodge guides.
- Enjoy 400 acres of tropical flora; orchids, bromeliads, heliconia, and more, on the Lodge property.
- Over 100 species of easily seen tropical birds; oropendolas, parrots, woodpeckers, motmots, toucans, trogons, tanagers, and up to 15 species of tropical hummingbirds. Birds will regularly visit the Lodge’s easily observed feeders, practically posing for your pencil and paintbrush!
- Free time for daily private reflection and relaxation. Options include: swimming in the pool or rivers; sitting on the lodge deck sipping a beverage and watching hummingbirds whiz by; enjoying a massage or facial at the lodge’s spa; and, exploring the lush gardens and trails on your own. Or, you may choose to simply snooze in your private hammock, enjoying the exotic sounds of the jungle.
- Conservation Funding; a portion of our proceeds support habitat conservation in the region.
- Space is limited to a maximum of 8 participants for a high-quality and intimate experience!
- **BONUS:** Your trip fee includes the complete online course *Introduction to Nature Sketching* created by Christine Elder; It walks you through the basic tools and techniques of sketching and painting natural subjects using Christine’s step-by-step video tutorials and downloadable guides.

OUR ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

We will spend our days at a relaxed pace, leaving our schedule flexible for the occasional rain shower. After a leisurely breakfast at the lodge’s restaurant, we will typically start with a morning sketching workshop, an easy hike, or a half-day excursion, followed by lunch. Afternoons will include group field sketching or time on your own, followed by group dinners at the Lodge. Some evenings will include presentations on the ecology and natural history of the region, while others will allow for private relaxation. All activities are optional, in case you prefer to take a day to yourself, relaxing by the pool or on your private veranda.

DAILY WORKSHOPS & SKETCHING Workshops will be held outdoors or in the spacious conference center, and they will cover the tools and techniques for sketching flora and fauna in the field. Instruction will focus on using pencil, pen, and watercolors to capture the personality and grace of birds, the color and delicate beauty of tropical flowers and the detailed anatomy of exotic insects and reptiles. An arts materials list will be sent upon registration.



EARLY MORNING HIKE: Sunrises are unforgettable at Pico Bonito! See the dew on the trees, feel the coolness in the air, and hear the cacophony of sounds as the jungle wakes up for each day. Begin your day bright and early, at a time that offers some of the best chances for viewing birds and other wildlife. A viewing platform overlooking the forest canopy makes sketching and photography a delight.

BUTTERFLY FARM & SERPENT HOUSE: The Lodge at Pico Bonito maintains an impressive butterfly farm, where they breed over 40 species, as well as an amazing serpent house, which displays several venomous but beautiful native snakes that we are (thankfully!) unlikely to see in the wild!

WILDLIFE REFUGE TRAIN & BOAT RIDE: The Cuero y Salado coastal Wildlife Refuge trip will be a highlight of our sketching holiday. Named for the Cuero and Salado Rivers, which meet the ocean here, this refuge comprises 35,000 acres of wet tropical and mangrove forests, with an extensive network of estuaries and natural canals to explore. A visit to Cuero y Salado is a must for birders and a wonderful experience for all those interested in Honduras' diverse wildlife and ecology. The bird list for the Refuge notes over 350 species while howler and white-faced monkeys, caimans, crocodiles, and turtles are all common sights. Perhaps the Refuge's most famous inhabitant is the elusive and endangered West Indian Manatee, which we may be lucky to see. Our trip will start with a ride in a small, motorized train along a historic narrow-gauge railway that leads through pastures and coconut plantations to the refuge headquarters near the mouth of the Salado River. Here we will tour the bird and wildlife-rich estuaries of the Refuge in a small, motorized skiff.

NIGHT STROLL: Search for nocturnal insects, reptiles, and amphibians guided by flashlights and the experienced eyes of your guide. Learn about animals that hide by day and roam by night. The trip starts by setting up an insect lamp at the forest edge. Then guests head off on the trail to the moist gallery forest along the Corinto River for a two-hour hike before returning to the lamp to see what surprises it has attracted. Although nothing is guaranteed, it is common to see tree frogs, arboreal mammals, bats, as well as a veritable potpourri of exotic insects easily observed at the 'moth cloth'.

RIO SANTIAGO NATURE RESORT: A short drive from our lodge is Rio Santiago Nature Resort, the self-proclaimed "Hummingbird Capital of Honduras," named for the river that rushes along its border. Countless hummingbird feeders surround a comfortable, shaded veranda with lots of tables that are perfect for sketching within a few feet of more than a dozen hummingbird species.



SAMPLE DAILY ITINERARY

The daily schedule below will remain flexible and may change at your guide's discretion or due to weather.

Day 1 Arrive at San Pedro Sula International Airport, where you'll be met by Christine, and our guide and driver from the Lodge at 2pm. Enjoy the 3 hour drive through the countryside and arrive at the Lodge in time to settle into your cabin. Meet for dinner and orientation.

Day 2 Morning workshop/midmorning sketching on the grounds of the Lodge; afternoon tour of butterfly farm and serpentarium; evening presentation.

Day 3 Morning sketching and lunch at Rio Santiago Nature Reserve; late afternoon and evening free.

Day 4 Sunrise birding hike, followed by lunch; afternoon sketching workshop; evening Night Stroll.

Day 5 Morning painting workshop at the lodge; afternoon painting on the grounds of the lodge.

Day 6 Boat trip at Cuero y Salado Coastal Wildlife Refuge; evening presentation.

Day 7 Hike along the rainforest loop trail and down to the river waterfalls; afternoon sketching.

Day 8 Free day to work on your sketch book, hike, relax, or sample the Lodge's spa offerings.

Day 9 After an early breakfast, we will say goodbye and return to the airport, with plenty of time for international flights departing after noon.

ADDITIONAL RETREAT DETAILS

THE LODGE & SPA AT PICO BONITO

Named by National Geographic Traveler as one of the "Top 50 eco-lodges of the world," and a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, the Lodge at Pico Bonito sits inside a 400-acre Honduran rainforest, nestled between two wild rivers, with private cabins and an excellent restaurant and full-service bar, where you can dine inside or outside with a view of the lush gardens and pool. Their miles of hiking trails go up into the rainforest, skirting spectacular waterfalls and stopping at bird observation towers.

Well-trained English-speaking guides will safely lead us on our excursions, while the comfortable conference room will be the stage for our daily sketching workshops and presentations. Tropical sounds fill the air, including parrots, monkeys, frogs, and the ever-present cicadas. If you tire of bird watching or sketching, try out the new spa where you can enjoy a facial, massage or sauna. Learn more about the Lodge at www.PicoBonito.com



LOCATION

All of our activities will occur within about an hour from The Lodge at Pico Bonito, which is located outside of La Ceiba, Honduras, on the northeastern coast, adjacent to Pico Bonito National Park.

ACCOMMODATIONS: The plantation style cabins are approximately 400 square feet with private bathroom and shower, louvered and screened windows, two ceiling fans, and private veranda with hammock. Cabins also have an alarm clock with radio, safe, and coffee maker with Honduran organic coffee. Outlets are 110v (same as in the US), and the property features complimentary WIFI access.



TRAVEL INSURANCE: We always recommend that you purchase travel insurance with your airline ticket. This insurance covers costs associated with flight delays, trip cancellation, illness, medical expenses, lost baggage, and emergency transportation. If insurance is not offered when you purchase your ticket, we recommend [Travelex Insurance Services](#). Also check to see if you are covered by any of your existing insurance programs or credit cards.

FLIGHT ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES: Airport transfers are included in your fee. If you decide to arrive early or stay beyond the program, you need to arrange your own private transfer with the Lodge. Participants should arrive at San Pedro Sula (SAP) no later than 2 p.m. and depart no earlier than noon.

MEALS: We will take most of our meals at the Lodge's full-service restaurant, where we may choose to dine inside or on the veranda overlooking the gardens, within earshot of the Corinto River, and with hummingbirds zipping around your table. Their diverse menu can easily accommodate dietary restrictions. They are open from 6 a.m.–10 p.m. so you can duck in any time for a beverage or meal if you prefer to eat alone. Your retreat fee includes a generous meal allowance that includes choice of any meals and drinks from the menu (alcohol is not included).

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Daily weather is generally sunny and warm with temps in the 80s-90s with occasional afternoon or evening showers. The high humidity of the tropics will make it seem hotter than it is, especially for those of us who live in arid climates. However, we will take it easy on our strolls, and we will always have plenty of water.

WHAT TO PACK: Everyone's traveling needs are different, but the list below includes items you definitely should not forget. You may want to download [Christine's Adventure Travel Packing List](#).

Documents: A U.S. passport valid for six months beyond date of departure, with one blank page for entry stamp. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their local consulate/embassy for instructions.

Clothing: When preparing for a trip to the tropics, it is generally a good idea to pack lightweight field clothing, preferably long-sleeved shirts and long pants for protection against bugs and sun. Ideal clothing incorporates synthetic fabrics that wick away moisture, dry quickly, resist wrinkles, stretch, and have sun and insect-protection qualities. Shorts, skirts, or dresses are appropriate for lounging around at the lodge for dinner. We also recommend a lightweight water-resistant rain jacket or pocket umbrella. For footwear, we recommend a waterproof trail-walking shoe or light hiking boot, and sandals for lounging around the lodge. You'll also want a wide-brimmed hat and a swimsuit.

Miscellaneous Items: Sunscreen (preferably waterproof, SPF 25 or above), camera, sunglasses, light daypack or fanny pack, mosquito repellent, headlamp or flashlight for the night hike, and binoculars (though your guides will have an extra pair and a spotting scope).

Art supplies: Christine will send you a list of suggested supplies once you register for the retreat, although you are certainly free to use materials you already own, and she will also bring extras to share. We will primarily be exploring pencil, pen, and watercolor techniques in our nature journals.

BAGGAGE: We suggest one medium-size or large bag and a smaller bag/carry-on. The Lodge at Pico Bonito provides excellent one-day laundry service. Your carry-on should have all of your necessities in case your checked bags get delayed. This may include a change of clothing, money, travel documents, toiletries, medicines, and any expensive equipment such as binoculars.

TRAIL CONDITIONS: Most of our time at the Lodge will be spent among the manicured gardens, along the entry road, and on short trails into the surrounding woodland and rainforest. The main trail system into the heavier forest has some moderately steep grades, occasionally with well-made steps, but anyone in moderately good shape should be able to do this trail at a normal walking pace. The bird observation towers are wonderful, but they have several decks of stairs that must be considered. On all of the trails, your leader will move at a rate suitable for the group.



HEALTH: All water, fruits, and vegetables are safe for consumption at The Lodge at Pico Bonito. Bottled water will be provided for you on our excursions away from the Lodge. If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply to get through the tour safely, plus extra days in case of a delayed schedule. Please consult your physician, as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As standard travel precautions, you should always be current with tetanus shots, and you should strongly consider other optional inoculations. Mosquito-borne malaria does occur in some areas of Honduras, although we will generally not visit these regions. However, you should consult your physician regarding prophylactic medicines. In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov).

CURRENCY: The unit of currency in Honduras is the Lempira. Most stores and shops in Honduras accept U.S. dollars, although you will get a better exchange rate on purchases made with the local currency. That said, you may easily get through the whole trip without needing Lempiras. If you choose to acquire the local currency, it is most easily done before you arrive in Honduras. The Lodge at Pico Bonito accepts major credit cards for personal expenses, alcohol, or on-site souvenirs.

LANGUAGE: No worries if you don't know Spanish! English is widely spoken in the places we'll visit, and all the staff at Pico Bonito, where we will spend a majority of our time, speak English proficiently.



SKETCHING HOLIDAY FEE

Approx. \$2,850 per person, double occupancy / \$3,700 per person, single occupancy

Fee includes: Airport transfers in a comfortable air-conditioned van; 8 nights lodging; 3 meals per day & snacks; guiding and instruction; group activities; entrance fees; service-related gratuities; and some art supplies.

Not included: Airfare to San Pedro Sula (SAP), Honduras; travel insurance; alcoholic beverages; spas activities, personal items (such as telephone and laundry); and U.S. guide's gratuity, which is never expected but always appreciated based on your satisfaction with our skills and service.

Tipping: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included in your tour fee. However, if your leader or any local guides or staff have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

Deposit: A \$500 deposit non-refundable deposit and enrollment form are due to hold your space on this trip. Balance is due by October 15th. If you learn about this trip after October 15th, contact us to inquire if space is still available.

REFUND POLICY: \$100 of your deposit is non-refundable. If you cancel your reservation more than 120 days prior to the tour, you will be refunded any payments above your deposit. If you cancel between 119 and 90 days prior to the tour, you will receive a 50% refund of fees paid over the deposit. If you cancel less than 90 days prior, you forfeit your entire tour fee, unless you can fill your space with another participant. If you cancel at any time, your deposit is transferrable to any Paradise Birding tour at any time in the future. We reserve the right to cancel the trip if it is not meeting the trip minimum (if we do so your deposit is refunded in full).

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

Inquiries welcome!

Instructor and guide, Christine Elder: christine@paradisebirding.com | Phone: 831-227-6996

Paradise Birding owner, Stephen Shunk: steve@paradisebirding.com | Phone: 541-408-1753

Mailing address: Paradise Birding, P.O. Box 547, Sisters, OR 97759

To reserve your space on the retreat, complete the registration form downloadable from our website, and submit it with your \$500 deposit: www.ParadiseBirding.com/HondurasSketchingHoliday.

We look forward to seeing you in Honduras!